

CIVILIAN AND MILITARY ENVIRONMENTAL SATELLITES TO BE LINKED

A US\$4.5 billion contract has been awarded to TRW Inc. to build and deploy America's future environmental satellite system, using both military and civilian satellites.

The contract is for the acquisition and operations phases of the National Polar-orbiting Operational Environmental Satellite System (NPOESS).

The NPOESS will combine US military and civilian environmental satellite programs into a single national system that is designed to improve weather forecasting and climate prediction.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) has overall responsibility for the converged system as well as for satellite operations and interactions with the civil and international user communities. The Department of Defense has the lead responsibility for major systems acquisitions, including launch support. And NASA has primary responsibility for facilitating the development and incorporation of new, cost-effective technologies into the converged system.

NOAA Administrator Dr Conrad Lautenbacher said: "By working together on this advanced satellite system, the three agencies will make the nation's environ-



mental satellite system more efficient, cost-effective and more responsive to our country's environmental information needs. This new system will provide vital information about our weather, environment, climate and oceans. In addition, our integrated effort is expected to result in taxpayers saving approximately \$1.6 billion over the NPOESS lifetime."

TRW will develop, fabricate and deliver the NPOESS satellite and ground systems as well as provide launch support, operations and support services for the system. (Source: *Environment News Service*, August 28, 2002, <http://ens-news.com>; more details at <http://www.ipo.noaa.gov/>)

EARTH'S CHANGING GRAVITY FIELD

Satellite data since 1998 indicates that the bulge in the Earth's gravity field at the equator is growing, and scientists now think that the ocean may hold the answer to the mystery of how the changes in the trend of Earth's gravity are occurring.

Before 1998, Earth's equatorial bulge in the gravity field was getting smaller because of the post-glacial rebound, or PGR, that occurred as a result of the melting of the ice sheets after the last Ice Age. When the ice sheets melted, land that was underneath the ice started rising. As the ground rebounded in this fashion, the gravity field changed.

"The Earth behaved much like putting your finger into a sponge ball and watching it slowly bounce back," said Christopher Cox, a research scientist supporting the Space Geodesy Branch at NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center, Greenbelt, Maryland, USA.

Currently, the Earth has a significant upward bulge at the equator and a downward bulge at the poles.

"Observations of the Earth's gravity field show that some phenomena are counteracting the gravitational effects of PGR. Whereas PGR has been decreasing the bulge in the Earth's gravity field at the equator, this recent phenomenon is causing the bulge to increase," Cox said.

"The three areas that can trigger large changes in the Earth's gravitational field are oceans, polar and glacial ice, and atmosphere," he added.

Cox and colleague Dr Benjamin Chao have ruled out the atmosphere as the cause, and estimates of current glacier and polar ice melting are too small to explain the recent changes in the gravity field.

"The recent reports of large icebergs calving in Antarctica can't explain this, because they were already floating in the ocean," Cox said.

Further, radar altimeter observations of the average sea level rise provided by the *TOPEX/Poseidon* satellite show *no corresponding change in the rate of the global sea level increase*. Consequently, mass must have been redistributed within the oceans. That's where the ocean circulation theory comes in.



Ocean currents can redistribute mass quickly, such as in the five-year time frame that these changes were first observed. The *TOPEX/Poseidon* observations of sea level height do show an increase in the equatorial bulge of the oceans corresponding to the observed gravity changes, but the data are not yet conclusive.

(Source: NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center press release, August 1, 2002, at website <http://www.gsfc.nasa.gov/topstory/20020801gravityfield.html>; also see Science, August 2, 2002)

HAARP WEAPONS WORRY RUSSIAN DUMA

The Russian State Duma has expressed concern about the USA's program to develop a qualitatively new type of weapon.

"Under the High-frequency Active Auroral Research Program (HAARP), the USA is creating new integral geophysical weapons that may influence the near-Earth medium with high-frequency radio waves," the State Duma said in an appeal circulated on Thursday [August 8].

The significance of this qualitative leap could be compared to the transition from cold steel to firearms, or from conventional weapons to nuclear weapons. This new type of weapon differs from previous types in that the near-Earth medium becomes at once an object of direct influence and its component.

These conclusions were made by the commission of the State Duma's international affairs and defence committees, the statement reads.

The committees reported that the USA is planning to test three facilities of this kind. One of them is located on the military testing ground in Alaska, and its full-scale tests are to begin in early 2003. The second one is in Greenland and the third one in Norway.

"When these facilities are launched into space from Norway, Alaska and Greenland, a closed contour will be created with a truly fantastic integral potential for influencing the near-Earth medium," the State Duma said.

The USA's plans to carry out large-scale scientific experiments under the HAARP program, and not controlled by the global community, will create weapons capable of breaking radio communication lines and equipment installed on spaceships and

rockets, provoke serious accidents in electricity networks and in oil and gas pipelines and have a negative impact on the mental health of populations of entire regions, the deputies said. They demanded that an international ban be put on such large-scale geophysical experiments.

The appeal, signed by 90 deputies, has been sent to President Vladimir Putin, to the United Nations and other international organisations, to the parliaments and leaders of UN member countries, and to scientists and the mass media outlets.

(Source: Interfax News Agency, Moscow, August 9, 2002; via Dr Nick Begich, EarthPulse Press, website <http://www.earthpulse.com>; also see website <http://server5550.iid.nrl.navy.mil/projects/haarp/>)

UK LEADS THE WAY IN ERODING PERSONAL PRIVACY

Individual privacy is being eroded in Britain to a far greater extent than in other developed countries, according to an international study of state surveillance in the year since September 11.

Many states have rushed through restrictive anti-terrorism and security laws in response to last year's terrorist attacks, but the Blair government is singled out for an anti-privacy "pathology" that the report claims is leading to mass surveillance of the population.

In the 400-page report, due to be published on September 6, Privacy International, a London-based campaign group, and the US Electronic Privacy

Information Center give warning of a significant loss of personal freedom.

The Privacy and Human Rights survey notes that in many of the 53 countries studied, communications surveillance has grown, intrusive "personal profiling" of individuals has increased and data protection laws have been watered down.

"In the rush to strengthen national security and to reduce the risk of future terrorist acts, governments around the world turned to legal authority and new technology to extend control over individuals," the report states. "Many of these proposals have had far-reaching consequences for the protection of privacy."

The report highlights the British government's use of the terrorist threat to introduce new requirements for personal communications data to be stored and to launch a new debate about a national identity card.

David Blunkett, the Home Secretary, also sought in June to extend the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act to allow private email and telephone records to be shared among more than 1,000 government agencies. After facing strong protests, Mr Blunkett withdrew the proposal a few weeks later and announced that he had "blundered".

Simon Davies, director of Privacy International, said the report highlights "a systematic attack on the right to privacy by all levels of the British government". He added: "The UK demonstrates a pathology of antagonism toward privacy. The rate of



"Yes, sonny, we are part of the global transcorporate military-industrial ruling cartel, but today we just wanna have fun."

growth of video surveillance, communications surveillance and information collection has exceeded the growth rate in such countries as Singapore and Israel."

The erosion of privacy in Britain is not a new trend. "Crime and public order laws passed in recent years have placed substantial limitations on numerous rights, including freedom of assembly, privacy, freedom of movement, the right of silence and freedom of speech," the report states.

It cites a number of illegal spying and surveillance activities by government agencies, often in violation of the European Convention on Human Rights, and estimates that 1.5 million CCTV cameras are now monitoring public spaces.

(Source: By David Rowan, The Times, London, September 5, 2002, website <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/>)

BRITISH MoD PLANS TO SELL DIVISION TO CARLYLE GROUP

British government ministers have defended plans to sell part of the defence research industry to a US-based company that has several former international leaders on its payroll.

George Bush senior, his former Secretary of State James Baker, the former British Prime Minister John Major and many other figures from international big business and politics are employed by The Carlyle Group, a US-based private equity and defence group.

The government has dismissed union fears that the British national interest may be compromised by the influence of

diverse overseas lobbyists linked to the company. It announced earlier this week that Carlyle was the preferred bidder to take over its research and technology division, QinetiQ. The former defence research agency has developed missile-tracking software, radar technology and other defence systems.

Fiona Draper of the trade union Prospect, which represents scientists at QinetiQ, said: "The fact that they are a foreign company will obviously exacerbate my members' concerns; given Carlyle's fairly opaque structure, there must be concerns over whether undue influence may be brought to bear which may not be in Britain's interest."

In addition to the list of influential names from US politics, the company has been linked to the Saudi royal family and until last year maintained links with the half-brother of Osama bin Laden.

However, Defence Minister Lewis Moonie insisted that Britain's national interest would not be compromised by the partial sale of the agency. "It is very important that half-truths and shades like that should not be allowed to cloud the name of a respectable company and one we have investigated in great detail, as we have any other company with whom we would be going into partnership," he said.

The British government is selling off a significant stake in the agency, having dropped plans to float the company on the stockmarket earlier this year.

Like other private equity groups, Carlyle has a history of taking short-term stakes in

companies. Industry observers have predicted that the company would be likely to prepare QinetiQ for full sell-off within five years.

(Source: Guardian, London, September 5, 2002, <http://www.guardian.co.uk>)

BELGIUM TO BAN FLUORIDE SUPPLEMENTS

Fluoride tablets, fluoride drops and fluoride chewing gum, for decades promoted as the crown jewels of dentistry, are going to be taken off the market in Belgium because they are poisonous and pose a great risk for physical and psychological health.

The usefulness and safety of fluoride has been doubted worldwide for a long time. At least 12 Nobel Prize winners in Medicine and Chemistry have warned of the associated health risks.

Research shows that fluoride can cause joint problems, skeletal deformations and osteoporosis, and can even cause bone cancer. Fluoride has a negative influence on the nervous system and the immune system, and in children it can lead to (chronic) fatigue, a lower IQ, learning disabilities, lethargy and depression.

Sodium fluoride, which is used in the so-called food supplements, is 80 times more poisonous than the naturally occurring calcium fluoride, with which it is often confused even by medical professionals.

And, not unimportantly, it is a poisonous waste product of the aluminium and artificial fertiliser industry. Multinationals like Exxon, US Steel and Alcoa can get rid of their waste totally legally—and they even get rich from it.

(Source: HUMO magazine, Belgium, no. 3230/32, July 30, 2002, at website <http://64.177.90.157/pfpc/html/humo.html>)

COURT RULES AGAINST FARMER PERCY SCHMEISER

The Canadian Federal Court of Appeal has upheld a ruling that the Saskatchewan farmer Percy Schmeiser violated a patent held by Monsanto on a herbicide-resistant canola.

In March 2001, Mr Schmeiser was ordered to pay C\$19,000 in damages for using Roundup Ready canola. He was also ordered to cover Monsanto's court costs of \$153,000.

Percy Schmeiser had argued that either Roundup Ready canola seed blew into his field from a passing truck or his crop may



have been contaminated by pollination.

On Thursday September 5, the three-judge appeal court panel unanimously ruled in Monsanto's favour, dismissing all of Mr Schmeiser's 17 points of contention. However, the panel also rejected a bid by Monsanto to see the damages raised to more than \$100,000.

Mr Schmeiser was not available for comment, but his lawyer, Terry Zakreski, said his client was disappointed. "We're still reviewing it and considering whether to seek leave to appeal to the Supreme Court of Canada," he said.

Trish Jordan of Monsanto said the money Mr Schmeiser has been ordered to pay will be put into the corporation's fund to reinvest into the agricultural community as part of a larger corporate charity program. "We have always said we will not profit from people doing illegal things," she said.

Despite his loss in court, Mr Schmeiser has become somewhat of a folk hero among farm and consumer activists around the world who are opposed to genetically modified food and the use of GM organisms in agriculture.

(Source: *The Canadian Press, September 9, 2002, website <http://www.cp.org>*)

US PRISON/CORRECTIONAL POPULATION AT 6.6 MILLION

The number of Americans in prison or under supervision by authorities as a result of crimes grew by 2.3 per cent by year-end 2001 to almost 6.6 million Americans, or one in every 32 adults, the US Department of Justice announced on Sunday [August 25].

The rise in the number of people in the US correctional system was slower than the 3.6 per cent average annual increase between 1995 and 2001, but the total number is a new high.

About three per cent of the US adult population is in the US correctional system. Of these, 1.3 million were in prison, while 631,240 were in jail, the Department said. There were 3.9 million on probation and 731,147 people on parole, according to the government's data. At year-end 2001, one in five probationers were women, while one in three were black.

(Source: *Reuters, August 26, 2002, <http://www.reuters.com/>; also see US DoJ Bureau of Justice Statistics releases at <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/>*)

SPACE WEAPONS AND WORLD EMPIRE

by John Valleau

In 1997, the US Space Command published a mission statement titled "Vision for 2020" (see http://www.spacecom.mil/_private/about_space.htm and also <http://www.noos.ca> for more details). Since 1997, it has been joined by further documents fleshing out more details of the plan, such as a "Long Range Plan". (Note the date, 2020, which gives a time scale for our concerns.)

"Vision for 2020" sees outer space under the unilateral control of the United States and filled with weapons able to maintain this control and also able to attack the Earth below. The stated purpose is "dominating space" to "protect US interests and investment". This involves "control of space", meaning "access to space, freedom of operations within space, an ability to deny others the use of space" and also "global engagement", which is "the application of precision force from, to, and through space" as "an active warfighter" with "space-based earth strike weapons". Apparently, then, we are all meant to live not only under constant US surveillance, but under constant threat of violence from a blanket of space weapons. Most of us would consider this an indignity too great to be supported.

To what end? The purpose already quoted makes that quite clear: namely, the forceful control of the first whole-world commercial empire. This is driven home by what "Vision for 2020" calls an "historic perspective", which states that "...military forces have evolved to protect national interests and investments" and "during the rise of sea commerce, nations built navies to protect and enhance their commercial interests. During the westward expansion of the continental United States, military outposts and the cavalry emerged [*sic*] to protect our wagon trains, settlements and railroads", and so on. It goes on to say that "the emergence of space power follows...these models" (i.e., of former empires and of genocide).

This is only to confirm, in a surprisingly frank way, what has become the common worldwide understanding of the intense US pressure to impose the neo-liberal agenda and structural adjustment on Third World nations (and others)—namely, to facilitate the classic imperial aim of seizing the resources and exploiting the labour of less-developed countries, where possible with the help of puppet governments.

But imagine space with a blanket of orbiting surveillance equipment and space weapons such as particle-beam and laser devices, rocket and missile launchers, devices to disable electromagnetic equipment or to control the weather locally, and so on. With this, it would be possible to apply force locally and instantly, to choose just that level of pain deemed appropriate, and to do so with impunity. It would mark the end of local sovereignty and much of human dignity.

The role of the Ballistic Missile Defence (BMD) project can be seen, in this light, primarily as a stalking horse: a relatively benign-sounding excuse (after all, "defensive" and, anyway, certain to be ineffective) for abrogating an Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty that would otherwise stand in the way of the bigger plans.

However, there seems at last to be a growing awareness among US citizens of what has been going ahead in their name. One sign of this is the bill HR3616 presented to Congress by Dennis Kucinich (D-Ohio), which would prevent the US administration from proceeding to develop or put in place space weapons. Meanwhile, various US NGOs are pushing for a new international treaty banning all weapons from space.

Although the events of September 11 helped the Bush administration to forward its space agenda initially, the travesty of the Afghan "anti-terrorism war" is making people start to question the direction of US policy. There will certainly also be worldwide opposition to the imposition of US military domination of space as the intention becomes widely recognised. It is the right time to speak out for a civil world order and reject the threat of techno-tyranny.

(Source: *Global Outlook, 9-11: Foreknowledge or Deception?, no. 2, Summer 2002, at <http://globalresearch.ca/articles/VAL206A.html>. John Valleau is Professor Emeritus of Chemistry at the University of Toronto and an active member of Science for Peace.*)